

Draft MINUTES
Housing Capacity Analysis and Production Strategy Policy Advisory Committee
Meeting #9
Newport City Hall Council Chambers
March 30, 2023

Committee Members Present: James Bassingthwaite, Cynthia Jacobi, Jan Kaplan, and Rev. Judith Jones.

Committee Members Present by Video Conference: Wendy Hernandez, Dr. Leslie Ogden, Betty Kamikawa, Sheila Stiley, and Bonnie Saxton.

Committee Members Absent: Dennis White, Mike Phillips, Robert Cowen, Mark Farley, Todd Woodley, Braulio Escobar, and Dr. Karen Gray.

City Staff Present: Community Development Director, Derrick Tokos; and Executive Assistant, Sherri Marineau.

Consultants Present by Video Conference: Beth Goodman, and Scott Goodman.

1. **Call to Order & Roll Call.** Meeting started at 6:08 p.m.
2. **Welcome and Introductions.** Tokos welcomed the committee members and reviewed the agenda.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** Motion was made by Cynthia Jacobi, seconded by Jan Kaplan, to approve the February 16, 2023 Housing Advisory Committee meeting minutes as written. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.
4. **Debrief Online Survey Results.** Goodman covered the project schedule, the Committee meeting dates, the summary of the project outreach, and the virtual open house that was held online from March 1st through the 20th. Jacobi asked if the response was typical. Goodman confirmed it was more than typical.

Leslie Ogden joined the meeting at 6:15 p.m.

Goodman reviewed the results for the housing types that survey respondents lived in, and the different housing issues the respondents were concerned about in Newport. Stiley asked what the difference was between the condition of available housing and the quality of available housing. Goodman explained these were very similar to each other and were synonyms. The respondents thought they were synonyms as well. Bassingthwaite asked if they correlated the results of the discrimination in housing in if the respondents were owners or renters. Goodman said they didn't try to do a cross tabulation. Stiley thought that people saw discrimination when they were in a shelter and were homeless. She described the experiences their shelter was having concerning discrimination of people who were homeless or trying to go into adult foster care living facilities. When it came to homelessness, there was a stigma to this. Stiley reminded that people were homeless for a lot of reasons. There were people who wanted to live in Newport were having to wait a year before they could find a place to live. Stiley felt that the senior housing and mental health facilities needed to have less parking. Kaplan pointed out that parking was the second largest concern raised on the survey. Tokos noted that parking had a direct correlation on affordability. Goodman thought they should use

the parking minimums for the whole community and look for opportunities to decrease parking where it made sense. Tokos thought that when the affordability challenges got worse, it seemed to exacerbate the parking problems because it meant some people were doubling or tripling up in units to be able to afford the rentals. This meant there would be more cars than anticipated compared to just a single household.

Goodman reviewed the concerns the survey respondents had about the development of different housing types in Newport. Kaplan asked if they were aware of any research or data on how long people stayed in tiny houses. Goodman wasn't aware and would search for this. Jones knew of people who lived in tiny homes that were very happy with them. Stiley thought it was interesting the amount of people who didn't support RV parks for long term living. Tokos wondered if these comments were due to reports that RV parks weren't built to current standards.

Goodman reviewed how the respondents ranked different housing solution priorities. Kaplan wondered if because people were feeling that their property taxes were too high, they questioned if tax breaks should be given when it meant they would have to pay more taxes to do so. Tokos thought the reality was that a number of folks in the community had fixed incomes and didn't have the capacity to take on additional tax burdens, which was stressful for them. Stiley noted the City of Milwaukee talked about the structure of their transient room taxes and putting barriers on how these funds could be spent. She thought this might be a piece to lobby the legislature with to see if it would have an impact for Newport. Goodman pointed out this was one of the items included in the lobbying the legislature notes. She thought looking at reform for how the state allowed transient lodging taxes to be used had a very clear tie with housing.

Goodman reviewed the discussion with stakeholders and the actions on the Housing Production Strategy (HPS). Tokos noted that when he talked to affordable housing developers, they weren't asking about incentives first. They were asking if Newport had land, which we had little of. This placed an emphasis on land banking which required a source of funds to do it. Tokos reported that the Northside Urban Renewal District had funds and a good portion would be for infrastructure. He noted that properties that could be reasonably served by the current infrastructure weren't very available.

- 5. Final Comments on the Housing Production Strategy.** Goodman covered the questions for the discussions. She asked the Committee to review the draft document and give her additional comments by April 7th. Goodman noted the actions were things to use when people came to the city when they needed help so we had something to offer them and be able to respond to their needs. These were meant to act together with the city's standards.

Goodman reviewed the existing strategies in Newport, the potential actions, and the implementation schedule. She reminded that the city was required by the state to establish an implementation schedule. If the city didn't implement an action by the deadline it set for itself, then the city had to do some reporting to the Department of Land Conservation and Development. Tokos noted a strategy they used was to batch things together and allow everyone to see how things related to each other, which gave it efficiency.

Goodman continued her review of the implementation timeline. The group discussed urban renewal development, homebuyer opportunity limited tax exemption, deducing development code barriers, allocation of CET funds, lobbying the legislature for resources, establishing a low barrier emergency shelter and warming center, supporting development of regional housing entity, participating in regional homelessness action plan, paying SDCs for workforce housing, growing partnerships with

community land trusts, supporting outreach and education to promote equitable housing access, pursuing Urban Growth Management Agreement (UGMA) with County, and researching rental housing maintenance code feasibility.

Kaplan felt that the comments concerning push back on short term rentals (STRs) meant that there were a lot of people who didn't have a good understanding of them. Goodman reminded that Newport had polices for STRs. Kaplan thought if those policies were good, there were a fair number of people in Newport that weren't convinced of that. This became a barrier to other development if people were opposed to it. Tokos pointed out that with respect to STRS, there was a hardening of positions where people either didn't want any of them or didn't want any regulations for them. This became more about if the outreach could effectively change people's minds. Kaplan said he was advocating for more outreach, and thought they needed to get serious about responding to people who took the time to give information. Tokos thought that this might mean having either additional staff or contracts to do outreach because it was one of the most expensive and time consuming things on the list. The outreach would need to be done in a targeted manner. Kaplan thought Newport might not want to be the lead, but a partner in getting information out. Jacobi noted that one of the City Council goals was to have a public communication officer to get ahead of things. Jones thought it made sense to rely heavily on community partnerships for homelessness. Stiley noted that when she sat in on a City Council meeting, there was a city planner reupping his term who made a statement that affordable housing was abusive and forced people to live in a state of poverty where they had no way of getting out. She felt that at that point, she hadn't been doing her due diligence to talk about affordable housing and their successes. There was a lot of misinformation out there and a lot if this relied on community workers who needed to take time to talk to others. Stiley noted that word of mouth carried a lot of weight. They needed to go back to the comments and reflect on the information received. The reference point was really important to move forward.

Bassingthwaite asked if there was an email list of the people who responded to the survey. Goodman said there wasn't. Bassingthwaite asked if the survey results could be distributed. Tokos reported they would do this as part of the open house. They would also be sending another batch of post cards and press releases for people to find out how their feedback would be integrated. Tokos thought the UGMA with the county was something they should make an adjustment, based on the feedback, to do a feasibility of a rental maintenance code. Jacobi asked how much staff time this would take. Tokos explained the Building Official would be involved to come up with a plan.

Goodman reviewed the monitoring of the implementation of the actions. Bassingthwaite asked if there was a definition of workforce housing. Goodman explained workforce housing was between 60 and 120 percent of median family income. This was different than affordable housing which was below 60 percent. Bassingthwaite suggested bracketing out affordable housing. Goodman noted this was already broken out in other places in the HPS and thought it would be repetitive to add it. Stiley noted Habitat for Humanity was doing their own land lease Community Land Trust, and her agency was starting to venture into that. She thought there was room for growth there. Tokos agreed and said they needed to do a check in with them concerning a weatherization type loan program. Stiley asked how Proud Ground was working. Tokos explained they had a number of homes in Lincoln County. The problem with this was the amount of money it took for down payment assistance. The last round of homes purchased with down payment assistance was in 2020 and the subsidy for these homes was around \$89,000. It was going to take a funding partnership and leveraging additional state resources with a match from the city before the other local partners had legs again.

Goodman reviewed the potential partners. She asked the Committee to send their comments to Tokos.

Goodman reported the open house would happen on April 12th at 6 p.m. She reviewed what would be presented at the open house. Tokos thought the instant polling at the open house should include “did we get it right” type of questions. Goodman reported the document would be brought to the City Council after the open house and they would adopt it by resolution.

Ogden thought the way to leverage and get buy in from the City Council would be to avoid picking the document apart and making it less meaningful, or taking too long to get it implemented. She asked if cities didn't implement these documents would the State come in and do it for them. Goodman confirmed that was correct, cities would be forced to do this. Ogden thought they should state when they presented it that this wasn't up for debate and we had to do this.

The committee was in general agreement to give a recommendation that the Housing Production Strategy, as presented with changes discussed, to the City Council for consideration.

Motion was made by Leslie Ogden, seconded by Sheila Stiley to give a recommendation of the Housing Production Strategy report as presented. The motion carried unanimously in a voice vote.

Kaplan noted that the plan was good and he believed in the notion around outreach and education. If they were going to be successful with it they needed to engage the public more than they had historically been done. He thought the council would need to step up in terms of funding or figuring out how they were going to go about things. Goodman suggested they make this point when presenting this to the Council so they had a sense of what was going on and had an opportunity to ask questions. Tokos noted the Council would have a work session before the May 15th hearing so they are able to get a little background and get some context.

Jacobi asked how they were planning on presenting the survey comments to the public. Tokos stated they would make it available and point it out to people so they could see what these were. Jacobi noted that people put thought and time into their comments. She wondered what the best way was for the public to contemplate this. Goodman thought they could select some comments and quote some of them. Tokos thought that capturing comment themes was a common way to do this. Jacobi wanted to assure the public that they were being heard. Goodman noted that when they were presenting this at the April 12th meeting they would hit on common themes. Tokos thought they could also share what the city had done with the respect to this at the meeting.

Bassingthwaite expressed thanks for being on the Committee and the time that the staff and consultants put into this. Tokos noted they would be reaching out to the committee members that weren't able to attend to this meeting so they could share their thoughts. Goodman said to send additional comments to Tokos by April 7th.

6. **Public Comment.** None were heard.

7. **Next Steps.** None were heard.

8. **Adjournment.** Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherrri Marineau
Executive Assistant

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